

UPFRONT

Geeks clink glasses



Singapore hosts its first FinTech Festival from Nov 14 to Nov 18.
BT imagines four drinks that should be served at this inaugural event. Please drink in moderation.
BY JAMIE LEE



Muggertoad Full Pint
Coffee, and a splash of Essence of Chicken. All of this fintech hub's nerdy sensibilities in a swig. It's bitter but for your own good.



Black Mirror
A flavour of dystopia. For the namesake TV series shows just what could go wrong when technology overwhelms us all.



Asimov, Single Malt
A smoky dose of logos with a 1942 vintage on robotics law (perhaps, to Singapore's delight). Order, order, order, on the rocks.



Singularity Shot, or the Neo
The fiery last shot before the machines take over in this post-human era. This One comes in a choice of red or blue.

BT Graphics

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SINGAPORE
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2016/2017

Global School of Technology & Management

Construction and Built Environment Educational Specialist www.gstm.edu.sg

President/CEO
Linus Wang

"Running a private school in Singapore is certainly not a piece of cake. There are a lot of regulations and personal liabilities to consider and we need to follow these closely. Besides the law, we also have to consider what the education market needs are at the moment, what kind of degree and specialisation we can provide to our students, and most importantly, what makes them want to register themselves with us". Global School of Technology and Management (GSTM) was established in November 2010 by Linus Wang and Tay Sim Leong with much anticipation and hopes of catering to the niche market that both of them and their partners could possibly contribute much to with their expertise. Armed with their construction and built environment industrial know-how and a strong desire to impart this knowledge, they set up GSTM to offer both diplomas and degree programmes specially catered to working adults in this field. "Our degree programmes are specially designed to suit these working adults who want to upgrade their skills continuously as they deepen their expertise in the field that they are already working in. We developed these programmes to allow working adults who previously did not have the opportunity to pursue tertiary education due to various reasons. With these courses, their skills are constantly upgraded though they may have left school a while ago.

This also enables them to stabilise their jobs and they may even be a prospect for promotion since they dedicate themselves to improving their skills and knowledge while staying on the job. These programmes fit in well with their working schedules and ensure they have sufficient time to pursue both academic aspiration and work goals synchronously".

Although its main programmes are focused on construction and built environment curriculum, GSTM is constantly on the lookout to establish presence in other new markets along the way. It has since developed its network with similar schools in other parts of Asia which will continue to serve GSTM well as it plans to enable the transferability of skills learnt at the institution. It first adopted traditional media like print ads, publications, directories and now, social media to share it's curriculum with the potential students. But none works as effectively as student referrals, a powerful tool where the graduates or the existing students recommend friends and colleagues to take up their courses here. After all, they have been through it and they serve as powerful testimonies to where they are now.

As a school catered to the working adults, its student services take on a slightly different twist as compared to other education institutions. In Mr Linus' words: "Both Tay and I have a background in the construction services and are both subject matter experts. We are thus able to advise them on the know-how needed for their specific role(s) and industry. And as we embrace our core cultural value, **Going the extra mile to provide value added services for the students**, we do not simply treat this institution as a profit generator with business growth, arithmetically. We are very motivated to assist students to move up to another level in their career or even their lives. A curriculum taken up here not only enhances the students' know-how, but it also builds their confidence and polishes their leadership skills- all this, makes them a better person".

At GSTM, the students need not look further to gain an "industry passport" to a successful career in the global construction industry. Their degree has gained recognition from

Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB), the world's largest and most influential professional body for construction management and leadership. This enables them to step up and out to work in other parts of the world with a stamp of approval on their professionalism level in the field. With MOM's push for WSQ qualifications, GSTM is actively looking for ways to develop its in-house WSQ approved curriculum per government framework. Moving forward, the institution is on the lookout for opportunities to collaborate with both local and foreign universities and is planning to introduce the Masters programme for their students soon.

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China shoppers spend US\$1b in first 5 minutes of Singles Day

Shanghai

CHINESE shoppers spent more than US\$1 billion in the first five minutes of Singles Day on Friday, e-commerce giant Alibaba said in the world's biggest online shopping promotion.

Singles' Day – named for the repeated digit 1 in the date Nov 11 – was created by Alibaba in 2009.

Now, in just 24 hours, it surpasses the main US online spending spree, the five days from Thanksgiving to Cyber Monday.

Total gross merchandise volume, Alibaba's key measure of online sales, had surpassed the 2014 total of 57.1 billion yuan (\$11.8 billion) by 6.54 am, the company said, putting it more than halfway to reaching last year's figure.

In the US, desktop sales for the five days from Thanksgiving till Cyber Monday last year stood at US\$7.2 billion, according to Internet analytics firm comScore.

Alibaba's New York-listed stock has been buoyant this year in spite of worries over slowing growth in China, as consumer spending has expanded while the old industrial economy struggles due to overcapacity and sluggish demand.

China's economy expanded at its slowest in a quarter of a century last year and has eased further this year, as Beijing tries to shift growth drivers from investment and exports to domestic consumption.

Alibaba kicked off this year's event with a gala in the southern city of Shenzhen on Thursday night, inviting international and domestic stars from basketball player Kobe Bryant to pop rock band OneRepublic.

Singer Katy Perry was also originally scheduled to perform but cancelled at the last minute due to a family emergency, she said on a verified account on China's Twitter-like weibo.

Analysts said that the event, which has gained more and more traction in the past few years, is key to Alibaba.

The day's turnover was only "a very small fraction of its total annual sales", independent ecommerce analyst Li Chengdong said, but was "a confidence index for the firm".

"If they do well in this, it is a boost to investors' confidence," he told AFP.

But sales growth may not match last year's 60 per cent rise, he warned, in the face of economic worries and stricter regulation.

China's commerce watchdog SAIC summoned Alibaba and 14 other ecommerce companies earlier this week, banning them from making up fake orders and lifting prices before giving out discounts.

Alibaba itself has sought to downplay the importance of the turnover statistic. "I don't have any requirement for the sales figure," Alibaba quoted chairman Jack Ma as saying in a statement on its verified weibo, adding that the day was all about "happiness and joy". AFP